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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 000566

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SUBJECT: JAPAN'S BURMA AID POLICY UNCHANGED FOLLOWING
GAMBARI VISIT

REF: TOKYO 00174

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Foreign Minister Koumura told UN Special Envoy Gambari on February 28 that Japan will support UN efforts to alleviate poverty and promote democracy in Burma. Japan's bilateral aid policy to Burma remains unchanged, and Tokyo has no plans to introduce non-humanitarian aid until Burma takes bold steps to achieve democracy and improve human rights, MOFA First Southeast Asia Division Principal Deputy Director Kuwabara told Embassy Tokyo on February 29. Koumura shares Gambari's views regarding a national referendum and the election process. Gambari met with Foreign Minister Koumura, Vice Minister Yabunaka, Deputy Minister Sasae, Senior Vice Minister Kimura and a number of members of the Diet's Parliamentary League to Promote the Democratization of Burma. End Summary.

UN Special Envoy Gambari's Japan Visit

¶2. (C) Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura told UN Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari on February 28 that Japan appreciates Gambari's efforts to promote human rights and democracy in Burma and will support UN efforts to alleviate poverty and support democracy there, according to MOFA First Southeast Asia Division Principal Deputy Director Atsushi Kuwabara. Japan will also support the UN's "National Economic Forum" concept, Koumura noted. Gambari updated Koumura on the current situation in Burma and thanked Koumura for his efforts to urge Burma to allow Gambari to pay another visit to Burma "as soon as possible."

¶3. (C) Although the junta has announced a time-frame for its constitutional referendum, numerous problems still exist, Koumura and Gambari agreed. The Burmese government needs to include "the voice of the people," and the regime's refusal to include pro-democracy activists, including Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK), in the national referendum process is particularly troubling, Koumura stated. Japan agrees that ASSK should be allowed to run in the election and needs to be included in the electoral process. Japan's bilateral aid policy to Burma remains unchanged, and Tokyo has no plans to introduce non-humanitarian aid until Burma takes bold steps to achieve democracy and improve human rights.

¶4. (C) During meetings with Vice Minister Yabunaka, Deputy Minister Sasae, and Senior Vice Minister Kimura, Gambari emphasized the need to for the international community to speak with a single voice to send a unified message to the Burmese regime. He stated that the "Friends Group" in New York is a meaningful and important way to coordinate the

views of various countries. Gambari said he is seeking to set up meetings with high-level Burmese officials in third countries as a way of boosting the frequency of his bilateral contacts. He noted it would be easier to meet with them overseas, but added it was still important for him to set up a small office in Burma to increase communication with Burmese officials within Burma.

¶15. (C) Gambari met with members of the Diet's Parliamentary League to Promote the Democratization of Burma for breakfast on February 28. The league's purpose is to take a firm stance on Burma's human rights violations and to demand the release of ASSK. Among the league's members who met with Gambari were Yoshinori Suematsu (DPJ), Masahiro Tabata (Komeito), and Ryuhei Kawada (independent).

Japan and Burma Remain Apart on Journalist Death

¶16. (C) Kuwabara also told Embassy Tokyo that Japanese diplomats from their Embassy in Rangoon met with Burmese police on February 20 for five hours to discuss the September 2007 shooting of Japanese journalist Kenji Nagai, but did not make any progress on uncovering new details surrounding his killing. Japanese police assess that he was shot at close range based on results from the autopsy and video tape of the incident, but Burmese officials continue to claim he was shot "on accident" from a distance. The Burmese officials claimed they still had not located Nagai's camera, Kuwabara noted.

SCHIEFFER